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Classical Meters in English Translations

By JOHN H. TAYLOR, S.J.

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An understanding of rhythm is essential to the appreciation of poetry. To run the eyes over the printed words of a Greek poem and simply translate those words into clumsy English is to squeeze the breath of life right out of them. Perhaps we should take our ukuleles to the classroom and sing the poems to a musical accompaniment; but apart from the fact that the school authorities might object to such unusual noises, we have lost the art of song of the ancient Greeks, and it doesn't seem likely that we are going to be able to restore it in the immediate future. But the words themselves have a rhythm which the ancients felt, and which we too can feel in some degree, if we try to read the poems metrically.

One of the best aids to an appreciation of Greek and Latin meters is the use of those meters in English translations. In some instances the teacher may find such translations already done by poets and versifiers in English.¹ At other times the teacher himself may try his hand at translating in the original meter. Or better still, he may have his class, or the better students in the class, see what they can make of it. The very fact that they must struggle to fit the thoughts into the metrical form used by the poet helps to fix that meter in the mind of the students. And though there is no such thing as a real translation of a poem, still, when the English version represents the thought of the original and something of its rhythmical movement, it may by comparison be a means of better appreciating the original.

The objection that classical meters are ill-suited to English verse is not entirely valid. Some of them, as Tennyson has shown, can be handled gracefully. But that they are the best medium for presenting a Latin or Greek poet to English readers is doubtful. Horace in the sixteenth century would have written sonnets, and in the twentieth might have tried free verse. For the choruses of his plays, Aristophanes would surely give us something in the Gilbert and Sullivan style. And I think the translator by the same token should try to find the English form most suited to the mood of the original. Hence, when I suggest that the reader of Horace, for instance, might profitably experiment in Horatian meters in English, I am not so benighted as to think that he will turn out good English poetry. But if he can achieve for himself, and perhaps communicate to others, a better appreciation of ancient lyric meters, his time has not been spent unprofitably. It is with this in mind that I offer the following experiments in translating some of the better-known Greek lyrics.

The most tempting verse form, because it has often been used in English and presents least difficulty, is the trochaic tetrameter catalectic, consisting of four trochaic dipodies with a pause taking the place of the short syllable in the last foot. It is familiar to readers of Greek tragedy and well known to English readers because of Tennyson's use of it, as, for example, in Locksley Hall:

Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn;
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

This is the meter used by Archilochus in the fragment in which he expresses his reactions to a solar eclipse (Diehl, No. 74; Edmonds, No. 74):²

Nothing now is unexpected, nothing strange or past surmise,
Since Olympian Zeus, our father, cast a veil on noonday skies,
And the sun, his rays enshrouded, sat in gloom of darkest night,
While in fear poor mortals trembled, breathless at the awesome sight.

Think not therefore any marvel worthy of your fear or laughter;
Wonder not at whatsoever may perchance appear hereafter.
Call it not a sign or portent, should the dolphins from the deep
Seek the hillsides for their pasture and bequeath the waves to sheep.

When we turn to the melic poets, we find exacting stanza forms and meters that are somewhat less suited to English. But let us not give up. The Anacreontic meter is an interesting one to try. It is based on the Ionic *a minore*, a foot containing two shorts and two longs (— — —). In Anacreon each line consists of eight syllables (or two feet), and the fourth syllable is shortened, while the fifth is lengthened. The verse ictus falls on the third and seventh syllables of each line (— — ' — | — — ' —). It is in this meter that we find Anacreon expressing his pessimistic and melancholy musing on old age (Diehl, No. 44; Edmonds, No. 69):

From my head life's hideous winter
All the leaves of youth has shaken,
And the rose that bloomed in springtime
On my cheeks the frost has taken,
While a bitter cup I empty,
In my feeble age forsaken.

And to fear the grim Inferno
Of the dead my soul is learning;
For beyond there's naught save shadows
In the gloom, regrets, and yearning.
And the road to go is dreary,
And 'tis sure there's no returning.

These lines might possibly be taken as trochaic tetrameters. This is due to the fact that monosyllables in English may frequently be scanned either as accented or unaccented. However, to accent the first syllable of these lines (except in the second line of the first stanza) would be quite unnatural. When genuine trochaic verse begins with a monosyllabic word, that word receives

considerable stress, as for example in Longfellow's *Hiawatha*:

Stay and read this rude inscription,
Read this song of Hiawatha.

Obviously my Anacreontic lines have a movement that is vastly different from the rhythm in these trochaic tetrameters.

Far more restraint is put on the translator when he tries the four-line Alcaic stanza. This is basically a trochaic rhythm, with anacrusis (addition of a syllable at the beginning before the normal rhythm) in the first three lines, and the substitution of a dactyl for a trochee in the third foot of the first two lines and in the first two feet of the last line. It is, of course, a favorite with Horace (who introduces some minor changes), and a good example is the familiar recitation of *Odes 1.16*:

O matre pulchra filia pulchrior,
Quem criminosis cumque voles modum
Pones iambis, sive flamma
Sive mari libet Hadriano.

Tennyson somehow managed to handle the Alcaic stanza with remarkable effect in his lines on Milton:

O mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies,
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages . . .

After reading these lines by a real poet, it is with some hesitation that I make an attempt to reproduce in the same meter the stanzas on the ship of state by Alcaeus (Diehl, No. 30 [46A]; Edmonds, No. 37):

Ask not where tempests over the ocean blow;
For now to starboard towers the angry flood
And now to port, while 'mid dark billows
Founders our ship far from land and shelter.

In vain we labor, tossed by the waters' flow
And raging blasts, while high on the mast there scud
Some canvas shreds, and on the deck there's
Naught but the spume of the wild wave's welter.

Our experiments would not be complete if we omitted the Sapphic meter, so familiar to us from Horace. However, in reading Horace's Sapphics we must be on our guard against introducing into them an accentual rhythm (quite different from the quantitative rhythm) which they may seem to have because of Horace's way of handling the meter. He varied the Sapphic measure by making the fourth syllable (which is often short in Sappho) always long, and by placing the caesura usually after the fifth syllable.³ This tends to make the unwary reader put a stress on the fourth and sixth syllables. But it does not belong there, as is obvious from the scansion of a typical Sapphic line in Horace: *Iam satis terris nivis atque dirae*. The beginner in Latin poetry can usually get the right feeling for the movement of the Sapphic ode by studying the first stanza of Catullus, 51:

Ille mi par esse deo videtur,
Ille, si fas est, superare divos,
Qui sedens adversus identidem te
Spectat et audit.

This simply cannot be read in the false accentual rhythm mentioned above, and so it serves as a good paradigm

to keep in mind in the study of Horace as well as of Sappho.

But to the business of translating some of Sappho. In the *Hymn to Aphrodite*, the longest extant poem of Sappho, there is a stanza on the queer ways of lovers that is wonderful for its smoothness and grace (Diehl, No. 1; Edmonds, No. 1). It should be the despair of translators, but since I have gone thus far, why should I stop here?

If he flees you now, he will woo hereafter;
Gifts he spurns, some day he will bring, returning;
Though he scorns you, he will come when your love has
Ceased from its yearning.⁴

But the loveliest stanza in all of Sappho is the one on the moon (Diehl, No. 4; Edmonds, No. 3):

Stars around Selene in wonder peering
Hide their heads before her fair beauty's gleaming,
When at full she floods with her silver rays the
World and its dreaming.

These are only a few of the classical meters that the teacher might try in English translations. To those who would have us go all the way and base our translations on quantity rather than on stress, I can only answer that the attempts at pure quantitative English verse that I have seen did not sound like verse at all.⁵ Quantitative verse was natural to the Greeks and Romans, because the quantity of each syllable (with some exceptions) was fixed, and it played an important rôle in their daily speech. Quantity in English is a fluctuating thing, and we are scarcely conscious of it. If it is objected that the method of using classical verse forms for accentual English translations will make the students substitute stress for quantity in reading the originals, I can only answer that we cannot entirely avoid that fault anyway. About all we can hope for is to avoid turning ictus into a heavy and monotonous stress, and to approximate the true quantitative reading of the Greek and Latin poets. With all our theoretical distinctions between long and short syllables and our careful explanations of the difference between ictus on the one hand and Latin word accent or Greek pitch on the other, in practice we try to pay some attention to verse stress and then hope for the best. To require more is mere pedantry. We cannot waken all the slumbering harmonies of the Aeolian lyre, but we can hope to bring to life again something of the rhythm that was in the song of the ancients.

¹ A good deal has been done for Horace in English. See John W. Spaeth, Jr., "Verse Translations and Imitations of Horace: An Index," *Classical Journal* 40 (1944), pp. 19-23.

² The references to Diehl are to the Teubner text: E. Diehl, *Anthologia Lyrica Graeca* (Leipzig, Teubner: 2 volumes: I², 1936, II, 1925). The references to Edmonds are to the Loeb edition: J. M. Edmonds, *Elegy and Iambus with the Anacreontea* (London, Heinemann, 1921: 2 volumes) and *Lyra Graeca* (1922-1934: 3 volumes).

³ It seems that Horace realized that the real meter of his Sapphic odes could be spoiled because of the accentual rhythm in which they can be read. His later Sapphics have more variety in the caesura, and this variation throws the accentual reader out of step. See L. P. Wilkins, "Accentual Rhythm in Horatian Sapphics," *Classical Review* 54 (1940) pp. 131-133.

⁴ For my translation I have followed Bloomfield's reading, *etheloisan*, in the last line.

⁵ It is true that Tennyson's experiments in quantitative meters are good, but the reader will note that in them there is no conflict between word accent and verse stress. Hence they are accentual as well as quantitative. See his stanza on Milton cited above and his hendecasyllabics, "O you chorus of indolent reviewers."

Let Us Face The Truth

BY WILLIAM HARDY ALEXANDER
University of California

The editor has asked me *totidem verbis* to tell what I think is wrong with the teaching of Latin and Greek in our American high schools and colleges.

I am not at all sure that the main trouble in the classical situation is with our teaching. Manifestly in any subject the teaching is a most important thing; for general purposes and in most cases I should prefer to have classical instruction done by persons whose scholarship might, in the usual technical sense, leave something to be desired, provided that they had the *vis vitalis* which generated interest and will to achieve and ambition in students. The real trouble about classical teaching is that so much of it is done, in the inscrutable unwisdom of principals and superintendents and school boards, by people who are more competent to teach a number of other things, just as, in reverse, Latin specialists are entrusted with anything but Latin. This is one of the prime mysteries of our whole educational system, and one which reflects very little credit on us, considering our reputation as a people for business efficiency. The classics call for a fairly sound and sure knowledge of fundamentals, particularly in the teacher who is introducing people to them; they will never get that from a teacher who tries to keep one jump ahead of the class. In fact, in language work that is really impossible.

But if we assume that our teacher is competent and inspiring, what then? Why should we not be frank enough to say bluntly that on teachers of the classics rests that part of the curriculum which, according to report, is to be avoided entirely if possible, and if not that, as nearly so as possible? The whole tendency of the age among us is towards intellectual sloppiness in our school product, as the experience of the Army classes has rather appallingly shown, and in an era of intellectual fuzziness, the classics are bound to have hard riding. If this intellectual sloppiness in children is abetted by feebleness and irresolution on the part of the parents, as at present, Latin and Greek are in the educational doghouse for the time being.

There is no good pretending that the classical languages are easy; frankly, they are not, as Milton puts it in his *Tractate on Education*, "a bow for every man to shoot in." There are many children, now forced by law and custom into high schools and even colleges, for whom Latin and Greek were not, in the wisdom of the Creator, designed; despite all the 'utility' arguments advanced for their taking Latin, I am not convinced that the small return of gold pays for the expense of washing so much sand and gravel. Latin and Greek

are selective, not inclusive subjects, and the real cause for genuine complaint is that the attitude of our school administrators, nearly all indoctrinated in the follies of 'progressive' education, is such that the process of selection is not allowed to operate, as in all fairness it should be, to attract the best students to the classics or the mathematics or both, as it normally will do. Under such officers the work of the Latin teacher in the school plan is rendered as nearly nugatory as they can make it. It would obviously be unfair to criticize any classical teacher at all if we stopped to think under what exceedingly difficult and very unjust circumstances they are working.

I am not (let it be said now for better or for worse) very sympathetic with the devoting of much time to the processes of building up "background material"; my own experience is that it so seldom has any front! I can quite understand how one salvages his or her job by making the work in Latin 'interesting,' but the salvaging of one's job must lie outside any logical argument on the present subject. I must say that to me the real interest lies in the languages and the literatures themselves. For that interest there is, honestly, no substitute. My sympathy goes out to the boy in the current California story who, when his teacher asked, after an elaborate exposition to her high school children of the minutiae of a Roman banquet, if there were any questions, said: "Please, Miss M., how do you tell which nouns of the third declension are i-stems?" When I say 'sympathy,' I mean that that boy and I are both interested in the classics, not in something about the classics. Since many of the readers of THE CLASSICAL BULLETIN are undoubtedly Roman Catholics, I would like to add that I cannot personally approve of the insertion in the school program of textbooks based on the Missale Romanum or the Novum Testamentum Latine to replace standard classical authors. Such practices seem to have a form of godliness, but actually, I suspect, they deny the power thereof. (2 Tim. 3, 5). It is obvious that if this were the better way, the Church would have discovered it centuries ago.

The whole matter is really up to America, and not to the teachers of the classics. Walter Lippmann has said that American life is definitely founded on two things, the Christian religion and the classical tradition. If Americans want their children to understand the foundations of American life, there is something to ponder in Mr. Lippmann's remarks; the foundations are now overgrown with the rank weeds and thorny brambles of sciolistic education theories, but they are still there to be recovered whenever American parents say the word. Unless they do, I do not see that I or any other teacher of the classics can do much more than perform my allotted task honestly and, as far as in us lies, attractively, without sacrificing, however, under that last category the substance for the shadow. Most movements in education are cyclical; in any given period one may find himself caught in the down-swing of the circle. When America gets heartily sick of ignorance described as education, as she probably will as the circle swings upwards, the classics will come again, as they always have done, into their natural own.

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Editorial

The Juniors of Shadowbrook, Lenox, Massachusetts—the Jesuit scholastics who, in a two-year intensive course after their Novitiate, put the finishing touches on their classical studies—presented “The Iliad of Homer” on December 17, 1944. The morning session was taken up with “Actus Homericus,” a presentation of the *Iliad* for English rendition and literary exposition. The latter embraced the four elements of poetry: emotion, imagination, thought, and expression; treated of Homer’s versification, style, and the essential principles that govern narrative poetry; and, finally, considered plot, character, motivation, structure, and dramatic qualities.

The afternoon session presented *Achilles*, a dramatized version of Homer’s *Iliad*, in a Prologue and three Acts, each consisting of three scenes, as follows: I 1) The Plain near the Grecian Camp; 2) the Camp of the Greeks; 3) Troy, a Room in Priam’s Palace. II 1) The Tent of Achilles; 2) the Plain near the Grecian Camp; 3) the Tent of Achilles. III 1) The Tent of Achilles; 2) Troy, a Room in Priam’s Palace; 3) the Tent of Achilles.

Professor W. H. Alexander’s frank expression of opinion, printed in this issue, is, of course, as all the papers of THE CLASSICAL BULLETIN, open for discussion.

Broad and extensive reading, says Dean Cosenza in his interesting paper, *Sursum Corda*, would bring the teacher into contact with the writers of those centuries that are later than even the silver period. “And why should our reading stop there?” The teacher who is widely read in the afterlife of Greece and Rome will more and more come to see the Greek and Roman classics in their proper perspective as moulders of the world’s thought down to our own times. He will be surprised

to realize the powerful hold the classics still have on our thinking, in spite of all that is done to undermine their influence. Is not this hold a strong purchase by which we may gain America back to the things of the spirit? The Dean’s faith in the ultimate victory of the classics is shared by many.

Incidentally, two books that point out this pervading influence of the classics are *Greece and the Greeks* by Walter Miller and *Rome and the Romans* by Grant Showerman. A helpful series, too, is *Our Debt to Greece and Rome*.

Dr. Horace

By FRANCIS A. PREUSS, S.J.

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That the conception of the bard as a moral teacher was widespread in classical antiquity is well known. Horace is an outstanding example of a poet who held this view of his craft. In a very useful and interesting Chicago dissertation¹ Harold B. Jaffee shows how Horace conceived his function as a poet under the figure of a physician of human souls, diagnosing the moral ills of mankind and prescribing specific remedies for their cure.

Horace, always primarily interested in ethical problems, began by casting his material in the popular satiric-philosophic form of the *Sermones*. Why did he later turn to lyrical expression, whilst still pursuing the same objectives and employing similar subject matter? The dissertation under review gives a very satisfactory answer to this question in expounding the larger scope which Horace found in the ode-form for the attainment of his therapeutic end. We think it worth while, in view of its value for teachers and students of Horace, to present here a brief summary of the dissertation.

Chapter I offers an analysis of Horace’s moral philosophy: Discontent and inordinate desires are the source of all human unhappiness; a modest sufficiency with contentedness, the secret of true happiness. Hence avarice, ambition, and self-indulgence are everywhere attacked, and with them their companion passions of fear (especially the fear of poverty and death) and anger. It is above all these latter, fear and anger, that destroy the equanimity of the *vita beata*. However, happiness does not consist in the absence of all passion. The golden mean which constitutes the happy life is the state of equanimity arising from the rational control of all the passions and emotions. The perfect setting for such blessedness is life in the country. Here virtue is easiest to practice, because the strongest temptations to excess are removed, and the simple pleasures of cultivated living are ready to hand.

Chapter II develops Horace’s therapeutic theory of poetry. He considers *recte vivere* as the end of life for man. As a poet, he feels it his duty to help men (himself and others) to realize this end. Inordinate desires and passions he regards as diseases of the soul which hinder right living, or make it altogether impossible. Sick souls should consult a doctor and apply suitable remedies. If one doctor or remedy fails, they should try another. But who are these doctors of the soul? Men better than ourselves (*meliores*), Horace replies; above

all, the world's wise men, poets and philosophers, who know the human soul profoundly and in whose books we shall find the diagnoses and the remedies for all our woes. In this conviction Horace in some pieces humbly goes to school to the ancients in company with his friends to whom the poems are addressed. In others, as a *vates* in his own name, he presents himself to the world as a skilled healer of souls.

But why did he choose poetry in preference to philosophy as his instrument for converting the world to right living? Because poetry has more concreteness, more immediacy for men than formal philosophy. First, indeed, he chose satire, (which, he tells us himself, he did not regard as poetry), because it offered an excellent means for moral surgery and cautery. But lyric could be made to serve not only that negative function of soul therapy, but also the positive one of commanding and glorifying the fresh air and sunshine of virtue and right living. Hence, after clearing the ground by a vigorous castigation of vice in his satirical period, Horace felt the need of performing the more constructive task of building up the positive content of the *vita beata*, and this he believed could be more effectively done in the lyric form of the ode than in either satire, on the one hand, or epic and drama, on the other. For the latter two forms of poetic creation, he felt he did not possess the requisite genius. Besides, the ode-form seemed to offer him possibilities not only of the inspiration and perfect balance of real poetry, but also a more personal and intimate instrument than epic or drama, and one that was peculiarly fitted to embody both precepts and examples of right living. He could address the ode to an individual person, real or imaginary, to whose character and condition the precepts were especially appropriate and offer himself as an example for comparison and imitation.

Chapter III contains the application and copious illustration of all this in studies of two series of typical odes, one diagnostic, the other curative, in character. Of these some are preponderantly preceptual, others exemplary; others, again, combine precept and example in the same piece. Some castigate specific vices, others commend particular virtues, still others contrast the two. In each poem technique is studied, especially Horace's favorite devices of imagery, poetical argument, and mythological and historical precedent, all used to stir the emotions and induce an effective moral cure. The diagnostic odes studied in detail are: *Od.* II, 16; I, 29; II, 2; II, 18; I, 31; III, 16 (all on avarice and ambition), III, 15; II, 9; I, 27; I, 18; I, 38 (on self-indulgence of various kinds), II, 10 (on fear), I, 16 (on anger). The curative odes examined are: *Od.* III, 17; I, 4; IV, 7; II, 3; I, 7; I, 9; I, 11; I, 17; IV, 11; II, 11; III, 8; III, 29; III, 19; III, 28; III, 21.

¹ *Horace: An Essay in Poetic Therapy*, by Harold B. Jaffee; University of Chicago, 1944.

Our novels, cartoons, mystery stories, and other similar lighter streams of literature, flow from an ancient Greek fountain. They exist today because Greece launched them centuries ago.—Patrick A. Sullivan, S.J., C.B., Dec. 1942.

John of Salisbury—Medieval Humanist

BY EDWIN A. QUAIN, S.J.

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The present war has had one good effect in that it has caused humanists to re-think and re-assert their belief in the contribution that the humanities can and must make to the post-war world. What might be called the *Manifesto of Humanism* was published a year or more ago by Professor Pound of Harvard¹ in which, in a masterly analysis of the totalitarian tendencies of our times, in both government and education, he called for a return to the study of "classical antiquity, the Greek-Hellenistic-Roman civilization, which happily kept no small degree of continuity during the Middle Ages, and was revived at the Renaissance. . . . The civilization of ancient Greece, carried on in the Hellenistic era and established for the world by the organizing and administrative genius of the Romans, is a decisive element in the civilization of today."²

Often in discussions of our debt to the past we notice a tendency to pass over the influence of the Middle Ages as a time when men were, supposedly, incapable of achieving the flowering of the human spirit, which had to wait for the dawn of the Renaissance. Such an attitude betrays a lack of knowledge of some of the great figures of that period. There are men in the Middle Ages whose acquaintance we should make that our knowledge of classical times may be enriched and its horizons broadened. The modern scholar who has made the culture of the ancients his own, and impressed his personality upon it, is rare indeed; but such a one may be found in the twelfth century, in John of Salisbury (Johannes Saresberiensis), who is, perhaps, the best educated man of the Middle Ages.

Born at Salisbury in England around 1115, John's earliest education was at the hands of a priest, who, besides initiating the boys into the study of Latin by means of the *Psalter*, engaged in the practice of magic, and was wont on occasion to concoct a 'witch's brew' with a view to having the boys peer into it, and see the future in the amorphous mass before them. John was a completely straight-forward person, even at an early age, and bluntly stated that he saw nothing but the nail-parings and skins that were there, and hence was considered an obstacle to such performances and was thereafter excluded from the rites. For this lack of psychic power John heartily thanked God.³ When he was *admodum adolescens*⁴ he crossed over to France to begin his education under Abailard, who was winning great renown for his lectures on Dialectics. He listened and learned with avidity and was disappointed when his teacher was forced to leave his post. For two more years he continued the study of dialectics under Alberic and Robert of Melun, and his estimate of these teachers is a fair example of his calmness of judgment and power of evaluation of men. The former was *ad omnia scrupulosus, locum quaestionis inveniebat ubique*, and could see in a moment all the difficulties that might be urged against a position. The latter was *in responsione promptissimus*, and could accurately define his reasons for a particular view. John thought

that the combination of the two would have made the cleverest dialectician of the times.

At the close of this period, in his youthful optimism, John thought he knew all philosophy *tamquam unguis digitosque meos . . . Videbar mihi sciolus, eo quod in iis quae audieram promptus eram*. He was not the last to become enamored of the tricks of minor logic; but, he soon realized that he had mistaken cleverness for wisdom, and hence departed for Chartres, the school of literature of the times, to study *grammatica* and *rhetorica* under William of Conches and Richard the Bishop. The latter he characterized as *hominem fere nullius disciplinae expertem, et qui plus pectoris habet quam oris, plus scientiae quam facundiae, plus veritatis quam vanitatis, virtutis quam ostentationis*; he was *vita et conversatione vir bonus*. Several years were spent in this study, after which he turned to the Quadrivium and theology. Returning to Paris with pleasant anticipation of intellectual discussion, he was disappointed to find that his old friends were still fighting about the same old difficulties, solving nothing. Saddened and wiser after seeing the narrowness into which they had grown, John concluded: *Expertus itaque sum, quod liquido colligi potest, quia, sicut dialectica alias expedit disciplinas, sic, si sola fuerit, iacet exsanguis et sterilis, nec ad fructum philosophiae fecundat animam, si aliunde non concipit*. There has been no more charitable and measured condemnation of narrow specialization than these words of our twelfth-century humanist. John himself had covered the whole of the medieval curriculum and after this experience probably rejoiced that he had gone to Chartres ten years before.

His teachers at Chartres, William and Richard, had been pupils of Bernard of Chartres, and John seems to have conceived great admiration for that great figure, who had died some five years before John came to the continent. He never speaks of him but in terms of reverence and affection. His final recommendation of the ideal method of teaching literature⁵ is: *Sequebatur hunc morem Bernardus Carnotensis, exundantissimus modernis temporibus (!) fons litterarum in Gallia*. So clearly and with such detail does John speak of Bernard's method of teaching that it is not surprising that for a long time it was thought that he had actually been a pupil of Bernard. Modern scholarship has disproved this, and has also distinguished Bernard of Chartres from Bernard Silvester of Tours.⁶ From John we learn of Bernard's insistence on care and accuracy, his drills in parsing, scansion, rhetorical tropes and figures, 'plucking the bird of its feathers' to show the beauty and art that had gone into the production of the poem or speech. We learn of the daily repetitions so that *erat apud eos precedentis discipulus sequens dies*. Continual practice in the imitation of the ancients was demanded and if, for the embellishment of his work, a pupil filched a purple patch from some classical author, the theft was immediately detected and dire punishments threatened. But, Bernard's bark was apparently worse than his bite, for John adds: *poenam saepissime non infligebat*.

His admiration for the Old Man of Chartres was not, however, restricted to the actual practice of the classroom. From the same *fons exundantissimus* he drew his

ideals for the religious atmosphere of the school; the evening lesson was concluded with a *collatio spiritualis*, and the day finally ended with the *De profundis* and the *Pater noster, quia nec scolam nec diem aliquem decet esse religionis expertem*. For the ideal conditions for the scholarly life, he gives us three verses written by Bernard, the *septem claves discendi*. These may possibly be the only written words that survive from the great teacher's pen. Glowing as he is with admiration for Bernard, John still had to state objectively and calmly his slight reservation as to the lines, and hence he prefacing the quotation with: *Et licet metri eius suavitate non capiar, sensum approbo*. (The seventh 'clavis,' *amor docentium*, is from Quintilian.)

Mens humilis, studium quaerendi, vita quies, scrutinium tacitum, paupertas, terra aliena, haec reserare solent multis obscura legend.⁷

The lines might well be taken as a summation of the life of John, who in extreme youth left his native land and, in poverty and exile, humbly and zealously followed the star of learning.

He could not have lived in the stimulating atmosphere of Paris and Chartres of the twelfth century, without imbibing a wholesome respect for the ancients, and in speaking of the *Peri Hermenias* of Aristotle, he remarks how easily we can gain knowledge being the heirs of the great men of the past. To crystallize his idea, he turns once again to his idol: *Dicebat Bernardus Carnotensis nos esse quasi nanos gigantium humeris insidentes*, "We are like dwarfs seated upon the shoulders of giants," so that we can see farther and more clearly than they could, not because we have greater stature or sharper vision, but because we are lifted up to our present eminence owing to their magnificent accomplishments.⁸ This attitude of humility permeated all that John of Salisbury wrote. His opinions are always clearly expressed, but he would impose his view on no one; often we read: *iudicet quisque*, or, in the case of a teacher who changed his method in later life, *An melius, iudicent qui eum ante et postea audierunt*. In a protestation of humility in expressing his own views, he confides that three things strike fear into his soul, and should do the same to all writers: *Ignorantia veri, fallax aut proterva assertio falsi, et tumida professio veritatis*.⁹

His writings,¹⁰ to which justice cannot be done here, include the *Policraticus, de nugis curialium et vestigiis philosophorum*, in eight books, a treasure house of philosophical, political, and educational lore; *Metalogicon*, a defense of the Trivium against the 'practical' men of his day; *Historia Pontificalis*, a history of the Papacy from 1148 to 1152, containing some priceless portraits of the great men of his time, and the *Entheticus*, a poem of unequal value. His letters, over three hundred of which survive, cast a great deal of light on his personality and times. The more one dips into these letters, the clearer becomes the picture of his delightful personality and his qualities of mind and heart. He writes a letter to an old teacher, Richard, thirty years after their association, inquiring solicitously for his welfare, and incidentally, badgering him for that copy of Aristotle that he has been asking for, for too long.

He hurries home to England, grateful for a truce between the Archbishop and the King, to be present at the deathbed of his aged mother; he requests from a friend in France a supply of wine, which is more plentiful than beer, *tamen utriusque bibax sum*. His countrymen, it appears, had a reputation as drinkers, and he urges that enough be sent, *ita tamen quod Anglico et potori sufficere debeat*.¹¹

Great as was his scholarship, John did not, however, spend all his life at study. From 1148 to 1154 he was secretary to Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom he was introduced with fulsome praise by St. Bernard.¹² For the next three years he was an intimate of Pope Adrian IV, Nicholas Breakspear, the only English Pope; for teachers he had the most learned men of his time and his works are dedicated to St. Thomas à Becket, whose exile he shared. In those years, he crossed the Alps ten times travelling to Rome in the business of the Roman Church, and traversed France and England, *multoties*.¹³ In 1176 he became Archbishop of Chartres, in which post, as far as we know, he died (1180).

No dusty pedant was John, but a gentleman, a humanist, and a scholar. He is a product of the Ages of Faith as well as of the ages of Pericles and Augustus. In him the culture of the ancient world had become fused with a vigorous Christianity; the humanistic elements of his religion were emphasized, and the spiritual elements of classical literature had been transmuted into something fairer and nobler than the original. He is a product of a more admirable renaissance than the men of a later time who felt it necessary to doff their Christianity and become pagans in order to breathe the spirit of the ancients. The need for such a reversion would have caused amazement to John of Salisbury. The order and calmness of his mind saw all wisdom as the gift of God, to be sought for humbly, in whatever nook or cranny it might be found. His Latin style will bear favorable comparison with the best of the ancients and his writings are filled with allusions and apt quotations from their works. In looking back to the bases of our civilization, all who are interested in the classics will find a kindred spirit and a source of inspiration in John of Salisbury. Our culture is based on such men as he was, and in looking back, we should not neglect the strides that have been made in the ages before us. *Nos quasi nani gigantium humeris insidentes.*

¹ Roscoe Pound, "The Humanities in an Absolutist World," *Classical Journal*, XXXIX, Oct. 1943, 1-14. ² *Ibid.*, 1-2. ³ *Policraticus*, II, 28, Webb, I, 164. ⁴ For a complete account of John's education, cf. *Metalogicon*, II, 10, Webb, 77-83. ⁵ *Metalogicon*, I, 24, Webb, 55. ⁶ A. Clerval, *Les écoles de Chartres au moyen âge*, Paris, 1895, 161. ⁷ *Policraticus*, VII, 13 Webb, II, 145. ⁸ *Metalogicon*, III, 4, Webb, 136. ⁹ *Ibid.*, I, Prologus, Webb, 4. ¹⁰ *Policraticus*, ed. C. C. J. Webb, Oxford, 1909, 2 vol.; *Metalogicon*, Webb, Oxford, 1929; *Hist. Pont.* ed. R. L. Poole, Oxford, 1927; There is no modern edition of the *Epistolae*, which are found in *PL* 199, col. 2-378. ¹¹ Ep. 85, *ibid.*, col. 72. ¹² S. Bernardi *Opera Omnia*, ed. J. Mabillon, editio 4a, Paris, 1839, Ep. 361, I, i, col. 658. ¹³ *Metalogicon*, III Prologus, Webb, 117.

Correction

"*Navis sine cortice*," on p. 32 (Jan. '45), should read "*Nabis sine cortice*."

Sursum Corda

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We admit it: the study of Latin and Greek has declined in most educational institutions (in which connection one hesitates to use the word 'educational'), and it has done so for so many reasons that it is useless to enumerate them here. The complete list of these reasons would constitute a catalogue of sins truly amazing.

It is trite and of none avail to keep repeating that words of Latin and Greek derivation form the bulk of our English dictionary; that the two ancient languages still live in their modern forms (French, Italian, Spanish, etc.); and that, as proof of their vitality, the most modern thoughts, inventions, and scientific ideas still have recourse to Latin and Greek in coining terms and names for things that are as modern as tomorrow,—even though some scientists say that this use of Greek and Latin derivatives is merely a convenience.

We have had, and are having, an endless series of studies on the influence of, let us say, Horace or Vergil or Ovid on this or that modern author; on the borrowings from, or allusions to, Catullus, Propertius, etc., etc. Such studies are valuable and desirable, of course. But both on our high-school and college students, and on their teachers, there is left the impression of a great void between Cicero and Horace and Vergil on the one hand, and, *exempli causa*, Petrarch, Keats, and Milton on the other.

The impression somehow endures among our students that the ancient languages died; that there succeeded a long and dreary era during which all life slept a sleep disturbed only by the barbaric invasions, by the migrations of nations, and by the isolated existence of monks in the Thebaid. The truth is the very opposite. Life, by its very meaning, did not stop. Therefore, the thinking of men did not stop. They dreamed dreams, if you will,—but dreams and visions and ideals are the only real things in life, and are made actual by the tangible actions of men.

How can anyone assert that "things stood still"? Broad and extensive reading on the part of the teachers of the classics would bring them into contact with the authors of those centuries of Roman civilization that are later than even the silver period. And why should our reading stop there? No classical scholar, no historian, and no teacher of any of the modern Romance Languages or of English is worthy of the name who has not devoted a good portion of his time to making a more or less intimate acquaintance not only with the classical periods of Greek and Latin civilization, but also with the centuries of development following the so-called fall of the Roman Empire.

I cannot understand how any historian, for instance, can have or present a correct view of many aspects of modern history without a knowledge of the church history of the centuries following Attila; nor how any teacher of Latin and Greek literatures can become aware and assured of the strength and continuity of those values unless he too have read widely in the literature and documents of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance. He would find a sentence structure and

a grammatical usage that perhaps would not be the same as those used in the golden period, but that were nonetheless clear, and answered the needs of the times in which they were employed, and, best of all, conveyed the meaning they were intended to convey. In short, the language used met the ultimate test,—it met the needs of the times, and, with further living changes, it created many of the modern languages.

We hear constantly these days (and rightly so) of integrated programs, and, conversely, of the evils of splintering and subdividing our knowledge into separate, watertight compartments. This sad error exposed the older curriculum, which emphasized the study of Latin and Greek, to the attacks of the teachers of the sciences, and, in their turn, these are now under attack by the teachers of the social sciences,—with correspondingly similar results.

The classics are still taught, but the teaching long years ago fell a victim to interests in special periods and in special fields, to an emphasis on a few authors. Such teaching has fallen a victim to a lack of vision that is to be gained only by regarding the classical languages as living, healthy, creative organisms whose end is not yet. We have been lacking in the *amor mi mosse* of Dante, in enthusiasm, in the enthusiasm which ruled the scholars of the Renaissance when they began to become acquainted with the brighter and purer light of the classical sources. And we should and can recapture their feeling by reading their warm and glowing words.

Students are often in doubt as to the utility of *Gallia est omnis divisa* or as to the eloquence of *Quousque tandem*. The college student who is fortunate enough to have an enthusiastic teacher may begin to understand, without going through the process of translation, the *Odi et amo* or the *in magnis et voluisse sat est*. On the other hand, high-school students, out of a sense of fair play, often have a feeling of resentment and wonder what Catiline felt like when Cicero's thunderings had come to an end. Under such circumstances, would not the teacher gain a point by reading to his students the answering pseudo-oration of Catiline which is to be found printed in many old editions? When students of Ovid read the *Heroides*, would it not be at least interesting to have ready some of the epistles written in answer to them by scholars of the Renaissance?

Teachers can recapture a great deal of the human interest and of enthusiasm if they make a first-hand acquaintance with the discoveries (apocryphal or not) of the early scholars. An Italian humanist made a pilgrimage to Livy's tomb at Padua; two students similarly visited the newly discovered tomb of Ovid; the bones of Aristotle were supposed to be preserved in the principal mosque of Palermo; John of Salisbury petitioned King Roger of Sicily for permission to exhume the bones of Vergil in order to learn the secret of his knowledge; and a defense of Catiline was written by Buonaccorso da Montemagno. Boethius was esteemed a saint at Pavia; coins in honor of Vergil were struck at Mantua; Padua boasted that it possessed the bones not only of Livy, but also of Antenor; the people of Arpino were granted an amnesty for the sake of Cicero, their ancient countryman; and engineers were forbidden

to trespass on the site of Cicero's villa at Gaeta.

Examples and tales of human interest could be multiplied indefinitely. Enthusiasm begets enthusiasm, for it is always true that *Amor, ch' a null' amato amar perdon*. Everyone grants that the original masterpieces that gave birth to this later enthusiasm are more worthwhile than the works of the humanists of the countries of Europe; but a teacher's personal acquaintance with those nearer by will aid him in finding and appreciating the purer springs of the ancient waters. Unknown rivers are usually explored from the mouth to the source,—whether it be upstream from the muddy waters of the Amazon where it empties into the ocean, or from the delta of the Nile to the far-off mountains of Ethiopia.

I have no fear of the future of our classical studies. With all the present emphasis on things material and on the gadgets and comforts of the so-called scientific and machine age, the things of the spirit and the soul of man remain, and will remain, supreme. Words are winged and fly further than the most powerful airplane that the hand of man can build,—and the ideas they convey will endure for ages untold. Long after the last and best internal combustion engine has ceased to function; long after the latest development in the field of television has been perfected; and long after the scientist has poured his last reactive agent into a test tube (into which he cannot pour my soul), men will still be happy and inspired by the written and the spoken word,—among which the words and thoughts to be found in what John Addington Symonds called 'the everlasting consolations' of the classics will not be the least important. *Sursum corda*.

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